

# Strategy Research Project

## Adaptation for the Ages: Strategic Leaders, 1972-2012 and Beyond

by

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United States Army War College  
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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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## **Abstract**

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As the United States (U.S.) continues its drawdown in Iraq and Afghanistan, it's clear that the coming decade is a vital period of transition for the U.S. Army. This transition is enabled by declining budgets, a shift in emphasis to the Asia-Pacific region, counterterrorism, and training of partners to shaping the strategic environment, preventing the outbreak of dangerous regional conflicts, and improving the army's readiness to respond in force to a range of complex contingencies worldwide. In order to meet the challenges of shaping a future volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) strategic environment, senior leaders must identify and develop agile, adaptive strategic leaders who are equipped to embrace and negotiate challenges that await them. This project examines how the U.S. Army, from 1972-2012, developed its organizations and training to prepare and develop agile, adaptive strategic leaders who manage a budget-strained, technologically-oriented Army. This project will also analyze how senior leaders learned from history, adapted to their current operational environment, and anticipated future requirements in order to adequately prepare strategic leaders to meet the challenges before them.





## **Adaptation for the Ages: Strategic Leaders, 1972-2012 and Beyond**

The all-volunteer force is our greatest strategic asset, providing depth, versatility and unmatched experience to the Joint Force. We must continue to train, develop and retain **adaptive leaders** and maintain this combat-seasoned, all volunteer force of professionals. We will continue to adjust in order to prepare our leaders for more dynamic and complex future environments. Our leader development model is an **adaptive**, continuous and progressive process grounded in Army values.

—The Army 2012 Posture Statement<sup>1</sup>

### Developing Adaptive, Agile Strategic Leadership

#### The Transformation Shift from Tactical to Strategic Leadership

The enduring question of how Army officers make the transition from tactical and operational to strategic leadership is rising again as our nation begins analyzing wartime performance, draws down military forces under budget constraints, and anticipates future requirements for the Army. The scholarly literature on strategic leadership is full of articles, books, and other text in relation to this topic. This work begins by defining how the Army defines strategic leadership and the skill sets required to perform those duties at this level. Furthermore, it is also important to explore how well the Army develops strategic leaders in order to negotiate the future complex, ill-structured challenges that our strategic leaders will face.

During the last twelve years of war, the U.S. military has observed civilian leadership orchestrating the return to duty of retired general officers because they felt there were no suitable active serving candidates. Most recently, in February 2012 the Obama administration nominated Lieutenant General (LTG) retired (Ret.) Douglas Lute as a leading candidate to serve as the commander of the National Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). White house officials praised LTG Lute's decorated military

record and his experience in advising two different presidents from two different parties on two different wars – serving more than five years at the heart of policy deliberations in the National Security Council (NSC) in difficult national debates.<sup>2</sup> During his tenure as secretary of defense, Donald Rumsfeld also orchestrated the return to duty of retired Army General (GEN) Peter Schoomaker to become the Army Chief of Staff when he felt there were no suitable candidates who possessed the appropriate mix of military tactical operations and pentagon experience.<sup>3</sup> Even during Defense Secretary Robert Gates tenure, we observed events where he fired, replaced or requested the resignation of several general officers.<sup>4</sup> What can be learned about why these successful senior leaders lose their jobs?

Lieutenant General (LTG) James M. Dubik wrote that “making the transition to strategic leadership is a multi-faceted and, in a larger sense, lifelong and continual process that cannot be reduced to a simple formula.”<sup>5</sup> He goes on to say, “Those who try to reduce to a simple formula what it takes to be a strategic leader or to develop someone to become one simply do not understand the complexity of the phenomena with which they are dealing. Some can make the transition, others cannot. Even among those who do make the transition successfully, capacity varies.”<sup>6</sup>

### Framing the Environment

The time is ripe, therefore, to ask some fundamental questions about the process the Army uses to develop agile, adaptive strategic leaders in times when our Army is in transition. As the United States (U.S.) continues its drawdown efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is clear that the coming decade will be a vital period of transition for the U.S. Army. As depicted in Figure 1 below, this transition is enabled by declining budgets, a shift in emphasis to the Asia-Pacific region, and a broadening of focus from

counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, and training of partners, to shaping the strategic environment, preventing the outbreak of dangerous regional conflicts, and improving the army's readiness to respond in force to a range of complex contingencies worldwide. In order to meet the challenges of shaping a future volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) strategic environment, senior leaders must identify and develop agile, adaptive strategic leaders who are equipped to embrace and negotiate challenges that await them (see Figure 1).

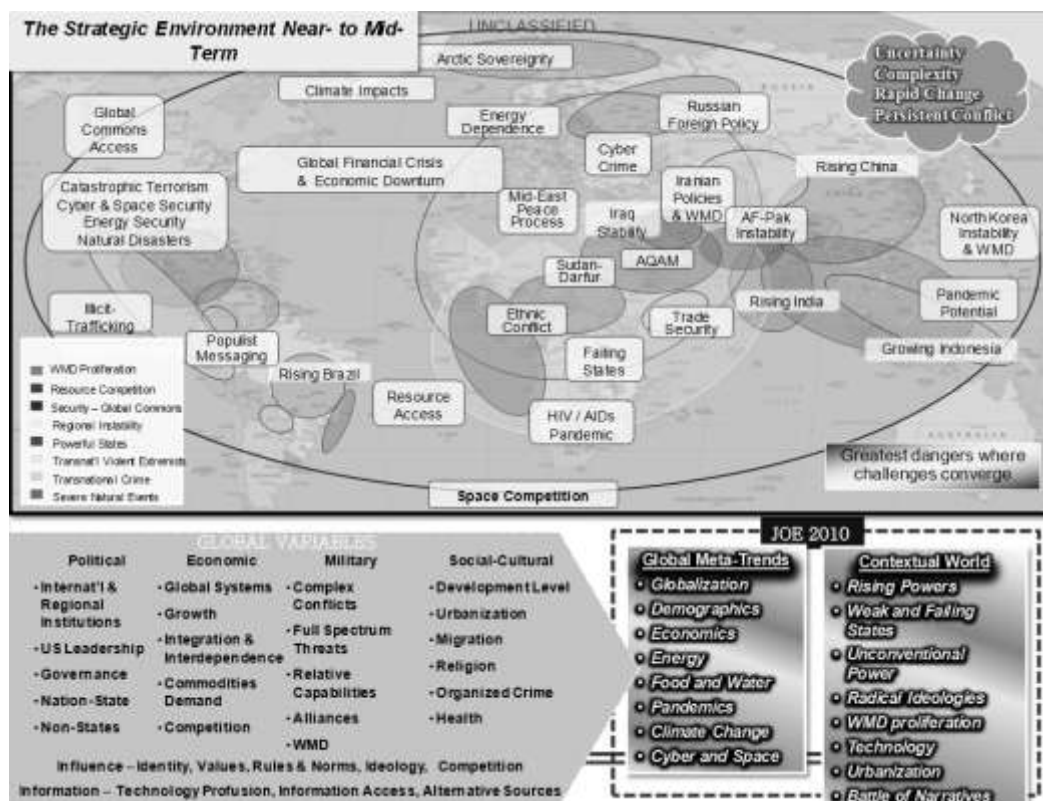


Figure 1: <sup>7</sup>

To meet these challenges, an examination of how the U.S. Army, from 1972-2012, developed and/or reengineered its organizations and training in order to prepare and develop agile, adaptive strategic leaders. Agile, adaptive strategic leaders are

*those aspects of leaders that directly affect the achievement of a desirable and clearly understood vision by influencing the organizational culture, allocating resources, directing through policy and directive, and building consensus.*<sup>8</sup>

Army Doctrinal Publication (ADRP) 6-22 and Strategic Leadership

Army Doctrinal Publication (ADRP) 6-22 defines strategic leaders to “include military and civilian leaders at the major command through DOD levels...responsible for large organizations and influence several thousand to hundreds of thousands of people. They establish force structure, allocate resources, communicate strategic vision, and prepare their commands and the Army for future roles.”<sup>9</sup>

Over the past two years, the Army has concluded its combat mission in Iraq and began the drawdown of forces in Afghanistan while transferring responsibility to Afghan forces. Additionally, we are reducing the Army’s end-strength to face budgetary realities and rebalance the force structure to support our nation’s objectives and shape the Army of 2020. The 2012 Army Posture Statement, as written by Chief of Staff of the Army General Raymond Odierno and Army Secretary John M. McHugh, has a subtitle called, “The Strength of Our Army is Our Soldiers.” Their work qualifies the Army’s need to “continue to train, develop and retain adaptive leaders and maintain this combat-seasoned, all volunteer force of professionals. We will continue to adjust...to prepare our leaders for more dynamic and complex future environments.”<sup>10</sup> So, as a result, the Army’s learning institutions are a fulcrum for educational and cultural change in developing agile, adaptive strategic leaders for the Army of 2020. The Army’s learning institutions can only improve, in a sustainable way, if the personnel systems are properly aligned to support the development of the Army’s future strategic leaders.

## Building the Army's Intellectual Capital—The Soldier

The idea of our Army's institutions in building upon the intellectual capital of its primary resource—the Soldier—has become increasingly prominent during the last few years. It is becoming clear that the Army can be re-created, made vital and sustainably renewed not by fiat or command, and not by regulation, but by taking a learning orientation. This means involving every Soldier in the Army's system in expressing their aspirations, building their awareness, and developing their capabilities together. In an Army that learns, Soldiers come to recognize their common stake in the future of the Army's system and the things they can learn from one another.

Although at certain levels, leadership development is a part of the Army's training efforts and future armed conflict will remain in the realm of uncertainty; therefore it is important that our Army has systems embedded throughout ones career that develop leadership skills and attributes at the strategic level. Charles E. Heller and William A. Stofft (1986), two of the scholarly giants in the field of America's first battles, suggest that a "thorough knowledge of war...increases the competence—and thus the self-confidence—of the military leader."<sup>11</sup> One of the most powerful statements that Heller and Stofft posit on leadership is that "because there is no time to study, pause, and reflect on the contemporary battlefield, these activities must be completed in advance. The intellectual preparation of the military leader has never been more important."<sup>12</sup>

Obviously, reality is more complex when addressing the issue of how the Army invests in developing strategic leaders of the future. General Martin E. Dempsey addressed the leadership issue as "job number one...It should be clear to all after more than nine years of conflict that the development of adaptive leaders who are

comfortable operating in ambiguity and complexity will increasingly be our competitive advantage against threats to our nation...Thus we've undertaken a series of substantive adaptations to rebalance the three pillars of leader development—training, education and experiences—and have proposed several personnel policy changes to make it clear that we are elevating the importance of our leader development programs.”<sup>13</sup>

Before approaching the challenge of developing strategic leaders in an uncertain environment, strategic assumptions must be identified.

#### Strategic Assumptions for Developing Strategic Leaders

By any objective measure, when you take into account the full range of U.S. political-military activities on a global scale, the bar for the Army has been raised dramatically. Bob Johansen (2009), scholar, who has helped organizations around the world prepare for and shape the future, provides sound assumptions to assist the Army in its campaign in developing strategic leaders to meet the challenges of the future. Mr. Johansen posits that “leaders with the right set of skills and appropriate expectations will need to make the links and organize people for action.”<sup>14</sup> Mr. Johansen also provides three overarching assumptions that are linked toward shaping and developing the requisite skill sets for strategic leaders of the future:

- The world of Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity (VUCA) will get worse in the future. Solvable problems will still abound, but top leaders will deal mostly with dilemmas which have no solutions, yet leaders will have to make decisions anyway.

- The VUCA world will have both danger and opportunity. Leaders will be buffeted, but they need not allow themselves to be overwhelmed, depressed, or immobilized.
- Leaders must learn new skills in order to make a better future. Traditional leadership practices will be called into question by startling forces and events. Cutting through chaos with these new skills, leaders will be able to make the future. Without them, they will be groping in the dark.<sup>15</sup>

Yet, Army strategic leaders who are advocates of institutional change may face intense challenges from a variety of negative Army subcultures to slow down change, to be conservative, and to reinforce traditional practices.

### Embracing Uncertainty and Managing Change

The challenge for the Army is in envisioning and describing accurately the features and dimensions of the landscape of future battle as well as avoiding the fact that the record of America's ability to predict the nature of the next war (not to mention its causes, location, time, adversary or adversaries, and allies) has been uniformly dismal.<sup>16</sup> Current strategic Army leadership struggles to keep up with these kinds of demands and those same leaders continually place the Army's institutions on the frontier of change.

No one really knows what the world, indeed, what civilization and culture worldwide will be like in 2020 and beyond. The rapid changes in technology, coupled with diminishing resources, may place the Army's learning institutions at a disadvantage for remaining competitive and relevant when compared to civilian education.

The safest prediction is change; the Army can no longer prepare strategic leaders to fit in the world of twenty years ago because that world will no longer exist. Arguably, with the pace of change accelerating, the Army has little choice but to create a culture that is dedicated to lifelong-learning and commits its resources to its institutions that must shape the development of its strategic leaders. That's not to say that over the past 10 years the Army wasn't learning—far from it. In fact, over the past 10 years of persistent conflict the Army has shown itself to learn and adapt to the leadership lessons it has learned. The current Army's posture on developing institutions that develop strategic leaders may or may not resemble the institutions as they stand today. Self interests will not be enough for Army strategic leaders to negotiate the obstacles set forth by the future volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) world that awaits them. The Army and our great nation will need agile, adaptive strategic leaders who have broadened their concept of self to include the larger systems of which they are apart—Domestic, Informational, Military and Economic (DIME) elements the United States' national power.

### Seizing the Initiative

In short, the Army has an opportunity now to refocus its efforts in transforming its learning and personnel institution apparatus' in order to improve how it develops agile, adaptive strategic leaders for Army 2020 and beyond. The hour is late, but not too late for Army strategic leadership to select generals who possess agile, adaptive skills to better anticipate future conflicts and better advise civilian policymakers on the preparations for our national security. LTG (Ret) Dubic wrote "that success as a tactical leader, as important as it is, is an insufficient guide for the selection of potential strategic leaders. With respect to strategic leadership, past performance is not necessarily



reflective of future capacity. The difference between tactical and strategic leadership is a difference in kind, not degree.”<sup>17</sup> Heller and Stofft posits, “the prewar experience of senior commanders and staff officers, are—even today—dictated largely by peacetime needs, not by wartime possibilities. Headquarters in the U.S. Army habitually expend their time and energies on routine administration, seldom pushing, training, and testing themselves as they push, train, and test their troops...Headquarters work hard, but the result too often seems to be that the troops...are readier for war than the men who lead them.”<sup>18</sup> There is no doubt that developing future Army strategic leaders will be a challenge, but, if the Army ponders this enduring question of making the transition from a tactical to strategic leader in its proper perspective, then the business of selecting those leaders who may become successful strategic leaders will better serve our nation in the long term.

#### Identify, Frame, and Fill the Strategic Leadership Gaps

The objectives here are both positive and normative, by exploring the way in which the U.S. Army currently develops its strategic leadership in service to our nation. The following questions important: Are the strategic leadership principles outlined in ADRP 6-22 adequately aligned with the U.S. Army’s training and human resource institution apparatus? Does current Army culture derail the Army Chief of staff’s efforts in aligning institutional models that shape strategic leader development in order to meet Army challenges of 2020?

General (GEN) Creighton Abrams: Rebuilding the Army after Vietnam

#### A Broken Army

Post-Vietnam brought transformation when General Creighton Abram's stated to General Don Starry, "Don't screw up the tank program. Just start with the doctrine, describe the equipment requirements, reshape organization. And get the Army off its ass!".<sup>19</sup> The end of American ground forces' direct participation in the Vietnam War in January 1973 left the U.S. Army a much weakened institution. Public trust in the Army was at a low point, with many blaming the military for the war as much as they blamed the civilian policymakers whose orders the military was carrying out. Many of the soldiers who returned from Vietnam faced a hostile or at best indifferent public reception. A number of soldiers had become drug addicts in Vietnam, where the supply of heroin was plentiful. Discipline, especially in the rear base camps, had begun breaking down in many units toward the end of the war as it became apparent that America was only interested in leaving Vietnam. The Army that left Vietnam and returned to America and its garrisons in Germany and Korea in the early 1970s was at low ebb of morale, discipline, and military effectiveness.<sup>20</sup>

The problems did not go away immediately with the end of the war. For those career soldiers and officers who remained in the Army, drug problems, poor leadership (especially at the junior NCO and officer levels), and severe racial problems often split units into hostile camps. Race riots were not uncommon, especially in the understrength kasserns of Germany as the Army tried to rebuild its European units that had been drained to support the Vietnam War. With the expiration of Selective Service induction authority on June 30, 1973, the establishment of a new, all-volunteer Army was under way. Many wondered if the Army could recover sufficiently to recruit enough quality

soldiers and, even if it did so, if the country would be able to pay the bill. The result was far from certain.<sup>21</sup>

### The All-Volunteer Force

Even while the Vietnam War was raging, the Army and the Department of Defense had begun tentative planning to transition to an all-volunteer force. For most planners, this was new ground. Except for a short period of time immediately after World War II, the Army had not had a volunteer force since just before the United States entered World War II.<sup>22</sup> Commanders could rely upon the steady flow of young men of reasonable physical and mental quality, since they had the entire manpower of the country to draw upon. Recruiting was not a high priority: it was not seen as entirely necessary. The reserve components, both the National Guard and Army Reserve, were at full strength and even overstrength, as young men flocked to those units to fulfill their service obligations with a minimal risk of going to Vietnam.<sup>23</sup>

With the formal ending of direct U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War and the formal establishment of the all-volunteer Army in 1973, the need to make the Army an effective military force rested first and foremost on the need to recruit more soldiers. At first it seemed an impossible task. Month after month in 1973 the Army, like many of the other services, failed to meet its recruiting quotas. Recruiters were initially able to fill only 68.5 percent of their quota for enlisting first-term male soldiers.<sup>24</sup> Attempts to hold the line for high-quality recruits, those with high school diplomas, seemed doomed to failure. Some, including members of Congress, began claiming that the Army was secretly intent on subverting the Modern Volunteer Army Program and returning to the “safe” days of the unlimited manpower of the draft. Even with the reduction of the authorized end strength of the Army to 781,000 in 1974, the Army ended fiscal year

1973, the last year of the draft, understrength by almost 14,000.<sup>25</sup> The Active Army needed assistance, so it looked to the Army reserves to fill the gap.

The Army's reliance on its reserve components changed the very nature of its active and reserve force structure and mobilization plans. The resulting policy grew out of the closing days of the Vietnam War. In 1969 President Nixon established a policy of Vietnamization, under which the burden of the war was increasingly transferred to the South Vietnamese Army. This action and the eventual U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam in 1973 meant, among other things, lower defense budgets. Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird announced in August 1970 a Total Force Concept, reductions in all facets of the active forces and concomitantly increased reliance on the reserve components for both combat and combat support capabilities. In 1973, this concept was declared policy by Laird's successor as Secretary of Defense, James R. Schlesinger. Thus, the major reason behind the enunciation of the Total Force Policy was more budgetary and circumstantial than philosophical.<sup>26</sup>

The budget reductions meant a much smaller Army. From its Vietnam War high strength of 1.57 million in fiscal year 1968, the Army declined to 785,000 in fiscal year 1974. Army Chief of Staff General Creighton W. Abrams, Jr., in 1973 set up a study group that postulated a future multi-polar world in which thirteen active Army divisions would constitute a "high-risk" force.<sup>27</sup> In response, General Abrams obtained the Secretary of Defense's approval to increase the Army's active divisions to sixteen without an increase in Army end strength. Abrams laid the basis for the sixteen divisions by shifting manpower from the Table of Distribution and Allowances (TDA) Army (headquarters and educational infrastructure) to Table of Organization and Equipment

(TO&E) units, assigning reserve component “round-out” brigades as integral units in late-deploying active divisions, and moving combat support (CS) and combat service support (CSS) functions to the reserve components. By the end of fiscal year 1973, 66 percent of CS/CSS was in the reserve components.<sup>28</sup> Now that the All-volunteer force was set, the next challenge was to develop doctrine that would govern how the force would fight and win the nation’s wars.

### The New Doctrine

The new volunteer Total Army needed more than mere numbers. It needed a mission; it needed to focus on what type of war it might need to fight. As a result, the Army began developing a new doctrine to regain its perspective and focus on its new missions after Vietnam. The Arab-Israeli War that began on October 6, 1973, further intensified concerns about the modernization and preparedness of the Army. The deadliness of modern weapons as well as the Army’s Vietnam-era concentration on infantry-airmobile warfare at the expense of other forces led many to believe that we could not fight how the Arabs and Israelis fight. American observers who toured the battlefields of Egypt and Syria began to create a new tactical vocabulary when they reported on the “new lethality” of a Middle Eastern battlefield where in one month of fighting the Israeli, Syrian, and Egyptian Armies lost more tanks and artillery than the entire U.S. Army, Europe possessed. Improved technology in the form of anti-tank and anti-aircraft guided missiles, much more sophisticated and accurate fire-control systems, and vastly improved tank cannons heralded a far more costly and lethal future for conventional war.<sup>29</sup>

A new operations field manual, the Army’s specific response to new conditions that required new doctrine, was preeminently the work of General William E. DePuy,

commander of the new U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC).

Surveying conditions of modern warfare that appeared to reconfirm the lessons he and his men had learned so painfully in World War II, DePuy in 1976 wrote much of a new edition of Field Manual (FM) 100–5, Operations, the Army’s premier tactical doctrine manual of the time. DePuy’s FM 100–5 initially touted a concept known as the Active Defense, which once more focused on “the primacy of the defense.” The handbook evolved from its first publication to become the keystone of a family of Army manuals that completely replaced the doctrine practiced at the end of the Vietnam War.<sup>30</sup>

### New Equipment

To solve the problem of how to fight an enemy that would almost certainly be larger, the United States relied in part on technologically superior hardware that could defeat an enemy with an advantage ratio higher than 1:3. To achieve that end, the Army in the early 1970s began work on the new “big five” equipment systems: a tank, an infantry combat vehicle, an attack helicopter, a transport helicopter, and an anti-aircraft missile. While most of those developments began before the Training and Doctrine Command’s first publication of AirLand Battle doctrine, a close relationship between doctrine and equipment swiftly developed. Weapons modernization encouraged doctrinal thinkers to consider more ambitious concepts that would exploit the capabilities new systems offered. A successful melding of the two, however, depended on the creation of tactical organizations properly designed to use the weapons in accordance with the doctrine. While doctrinal development and equipment modernization were under way, force designers also reexamined the structure of the field army.<sup>31</sup>

## New Organization

After Vietnam, the Army underwent a number of organizational changes at the higher headquarters and tactical levels. At the highest level, the Army determined to reorganize its command structure for the continental United States (CONUS) and separate its essentially command and control headquarters from its training base. Armed with the Secretary's approval, DePuy drove his reorganization past protesting Continental Army Command (CONARC) and Combat Developments Command (CDC) commanders. Westmoreland appointed Maj. Gen. James G. Kalergis as Project Manager for implementing the reorganization, Operation STEADFAST.<sup>32</sup> The detailed plan transferred all Army schools except the Army War College, the U.S. Military Academy, and medical professional training schools to the new Army Training and Doctrine Command on July 1, 1973, along with the responsibility for ROTC that would come under TRADOC's new Cadet Command. TRADOC would occupy the old CONARC headquarters at Fort Monroe, Virginia. On the same day, the new Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) at Fort McPherson, Georgia, assumed command of all active and reserve Army forces in CONUS and consolidated existing armies into three Continental U.S. Armies (CONUSAs).<sup>33</sup>

## New Training

To prepare soldiers for contemporary battle, TRADOC planners in the 1970s and 1980s developed a comprehensive and interconnected training program that systematically developed individual and unit proficiency and then tested that competence in tough, realistic exercises. To some in the Army, it seemed as if they were on the verge of a revolution in training; to others it was a return to the basics of soldier training, focused on the simple concept "Be-Know-Do."<sup>34</sup>

Individual training was the heart of the program, and the Training and Doctrine Command gradually developed a methodology for training that clearly defined the desired skills and then trained the soldier accordingly. This technique cut away much of the superfluous and was an exceptional approach to the repetitive tasks that made up much of soldier training. Once the soldier mastered the skills appropriate to his grade, skill qualification tests continued to measure his grasp of his profession through a series of written and performance tests.<sup>35</sup>

Training became increasingly important through the 1970s and 1980s. By the summer of 1990 the Training and Doctrine Command had created a coherent series of schools to train officers in their principle duties at each major turning point in their careers. Lieutenants began with an officer basic course that introduced them to the duties of their branch of service. After developing experience as senior lieutenants or junior captains, the officers returned for an officer advanced course that trained them for the requirements of company, battery, and troop command.<sup>36</sup>

The new Combined Arms and Services Staff School at Fort Leavenworth instructed successful company commanders in the art of battalion staff duty. The premier officer school remained the Command and General Staff College, also at Fort Leavenworth, which junior majors attended before serving as executive and operations officers of battalions and brigades. Although all Army schools taught the concepts and language of AirLand Battle, it was at Leavenworth that the professional officer attained real fluency in that doctrine. For the select few, a second year at Fort Leavenworth in the School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) offered preparation as division and higher operations officers and Army strategists.<sup>37</sup>



Finally, lieutenant colonels with successful battalion commands behind them, might be chosen to attend the services' prestigious senior schools: the Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania; the Navy War College, Newport, Rhode Island; the Air War College, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama; and the National War College or Industrial College of the Armed Forces, Fort McNair, Washington, D.C. Beyond those major schools, officers might attend one or more short courses in subjects ranging from foreign language to organizational management. The career officer thus expected to spend roughly one year of every four in some sort of school, either as student or as teacher.<sup>38</sup> These examinations of GEN Abram's Army transformation efforts after Vietnam bring forth several impressions to whether GEN Abram's appropriately addressed the development of strategic leaders of his time.

#### Strategic Leader Development: Opportunity Missed

GEN Abram's efforts in transforming the Army was revolutionary in that era in how the Army treated, organized, and trained its Soldiers and formations. The all-volunteer force served as the beginning of a renaissance in the ranks and paved the way for a newly professional military, but this new approach would require major changes in how the Army developed and trained its strategic leaders—an opportunity GEN Abrams missed. The Army that GEN Abram's transformed was far better at improving tactically than it had been at improving strategically, and as a result Army strategic leadership would sometimes assume greater responsibilities than those normally associated with their ranks or positions, particularly in joint operations with units from the other American military services or in combined operations with forces from allied nations.

The strategic environment of GEN Abram's time was characterized by considerable uncertainty and rapid change, accompanied by dramatic developments inside and outside of the Army that affected GEN Abrams and other senior uniformed military leaders on what the Army currently was and does and the likely shape of its future. Business as usual at the time would not have been adequate for the challenges set before GEN Abrams. Due to the changing nature of warfare, the nature of the times called for Army strategic leaders to be more than just excellent tacticians of conventional war or rely on technical competence alone to lead the future Army. The Army needed strategic leaders with deep expertise across the other three fields of expert knowledge of the profession, particularly the political-cultural, as they deal increasingly with organizations and entities not traditionally affiliated with the Army.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, GEN Abram's opportunity to develop a more diverse, well-balanced pool of strategic leaders was missed.

Although it may have been desirable to maintain traditional Army practices in training, personnel, organization, equipment, and leader development, it was difficult for GEN Abrams, if not impossible, to achieve all or even most of these traditional practices simultaneously. Army transformation was inevitable and vital to US national security. American intelligence agencies in the early 1970s noted an increase of five Soviet armored divisions in Europe, the continued restationing of Soviet Army divisions farther to the west, and a major improvement in equipment, with T-62 and T-72 tanks replacing older models and with a corresponding modernization of other classes of weapons. The Arab-Israeli War that began on October 6, 1973, further intensified concerns about the modernization and preparedness of the Army for intense ground

combat. The deadliness of modern weapons as well as the Army's Vietnam-era concentration on infantry-airmobile warfare at the expense of other forces led many to believe that we could not fight this new type of war.<sup>40</sup> These and other factors influenced GEN Abrams' vision on transformation.

Therefore, GEN Abram's adapted by transforming the Army to an all-volunteer force in 1973, created doctrine to enable standardized training, and anticipated materiel requirements by programming the "Big Five" in the Army's budget to counter potential adversary military capabilities. The new "big five" equipment systems were: the tank (M1 Tank), an infantry combat vehicle (M2 Bradley), an attack helicopter (AH-64A Apache), a transport helicopter (UH-60A Black Hawk), and an anti-aircraft missile (Patriot air defense missile). The all-volunteer force served as the beginning of a renaissance in the ranks and paved the way for a newly professional military, but there were strategic opportunities that were missed during this transformation—the Army failed to retain the professional knowledge on counterinsurgency it had gained at a high price in Vietnam . Additionally, the Army failed in its development of strategic leaders to lead this new professional military and provide well-suited officers to assist political leaders in attaining strategic success. The Army and the nation, at the time, needed officers who invented new weapon systems, of course, but we also needed agile, adaptive strategic leaders who would eventually serve our nation effectively at strategic levels.

General Gordon R. Sullivan: Transforming an Army at War

#### Leading the Army toward Modularity

Ultimately, we are creating great leaders—impeccably schooled in the fundamentals but able to improvise to meet unpredictable circumstances...We have the best leader development system in the

world because we are a learning organization, determined to grow and change to serve our nation...Our leader development programs will chart our course into the 21st century...I can state with confidence that, educated and inspired by our leader development effort, we will be ready today, tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow.<sup>41</sup>

When General Gordon R. Sullivan became the chief of staff of the Army in June 1991, the service was beginning to change from a forward-deployed force oriented toward deterring the Soviet Union to a smaller, more flexible body based primarily in the United States. This more compact force would have to be prepared to conduct missions of all sizes, not just large-scale, high-intensity combat. They would have to develop what service members called an expeditionary mind-set, to be capable of quick deployment overseas when necessary. Concerned after a year in office that existing methods for changing the Army were too slow to meet those demands, General Sullivan organized a set of experiments and exercises known as the Louisiana Maneuvers to investigate how to hasten developments. Much of the work that followed covered two main areas: how best to design units that had fighting power equal to or greater than that of current units but could deploy more quickly; and how to use new and future digital technology to improve command and control. To save time and money, many of the experiments and exercises relied on computer simulations.<sup>42</sup>

### Force XXI

Sullivan set the Army to work on his concept for change in March 1994. Named Force XXI, the campaign initially developed along two lines. The first, involving the redesign of the service's operational forces, became the responsibility of the Army's Training and Doctrine Command. The second, an effort to develop and field digital information technologies came under a newly established Army Digitization Office. Sullivan soon realized that the breadth of the reorganization he envisioned would

require the participation not only of combat units, but also of those parts of the Army that generated and supported them. He instructed the vice chief of staff of the Army to oversee that work.<sup>43</sup>

Given the political and military situation in the post–Cold War world, moreover, the Army could probably never again expect to conduct major operations on its own. Versatile enough to deploy for almost any mission, from humanitarian assistance to a major conventional war, its forces would have to be able to work effectively with the other American military services. Army command elements might also have to serve as combined headquarters with the militaries of other nations or coordinate with nongovernmental agencies.<sup>44</sup> The challenge that remained was scaling the Army to meet all possible requirements for ground troops in the post–Cold War world.

The TRADOC Pamphlet 535-5 stated that modularity, defined as adaptable standardization, would be an important characteristic of the future Army because the service would probably lack the scale of organization necessary to meet all possible requirements for ground troops in the post–Cold War world. The pamphlet cautioned that implementing modularity in the Force XXI Army would require fielding the sort of computerized information technologies that would allow fewer personnel to do as much or more than the larger staffs currently in place. The publication suggested that the division would remain the Army’s main tactical formation but asserted that when necessary, modularity would allow a rapid, task-related configuration of a division and its support elements to do a specific job.<sup>45</sup>

### Training Guidance

The Training and Doctrine Command provided further guidance in a January 1995 pamphlet. The publication specified that modularity was, for the time being, a

concept that focused on echelons above division and on combat support units (such as engineers and signal elements that provided operational assistance to forces in a battle zone) and on combat service support units (such as ordnance and transportation that sustained fighting forces in theater at all levels of war).

The January 1995 pamphlet highlighted three sets of circumstances that seemed particularly important. The first was that the success of the idea itself would depend on the presence of effective information systems linked to reliable telecommunications. This would ensure that all the units involved in an operation were reliably connected. The second was that the new approach would require major changes in how the Army trained its people. The troops and their officers would sometimes assume greater responsibilities than those normally associated with their ranks or positions, particularly in joint operations with units from the other American military services or in combined operations with forces from allied nations. The third was that a modular force might need more leaders of all ranks than a conventionally configured force. Their technical expertise and experience would come in handy in the highly automated units, and their presence would sometimes be necessary to provide command and control for the many independent elements that some missions would entail.<sup>46</sup> In this examination of GEN Sullivan's Army transformation efforts after 1991, several impressions have also emerged.

#### Strategic Leader Development: Opportunity Missed

GEN Sullivan's efforts in transforming the Army was revolutionary in that era in how the Army treated, organized, and trained its Soldiers and formations. His reorganization efforts resembled his predecessor in many ways, but it was also very different. As with GEN Abrams, it came in response to a new strategic threat. It also

relied heavily on recent technological advances and had the benefit of decisive leadership from a deeply concerned chief of staff. Unlike GEN Abrams, however, the reorganization altered every echelon of the force from battalion to army. GEN Sullivan's approach served as another chapter for change throughout the ranks, but this new approach would require major changes in how the Army developed and trained its strategic leadership. It is here where GEN Sullivan's opportunity to develop a more diverse, well-balanced pool of strategic leaders had also been missed.

Occurring in time of war rather than peace and confronting huge budgetary and manpower limitations, GEN Sullivan's Army reorganization efforts also placed greater emphasis than before on the interdependence of Army units with those from the other services. Drawing on a bank of expertise and experience that far surpassed what had been available in the earlier periods, it likewise used emerging technology to a greater extent than in the past. General Sullivan had begun the effort to transform the Army to fit a post-Cold War world. Compressing the process, however, had certain costs, in particular, a lack of sufficient doctrine and proper training packages for the first modular units. The gap between design and doctrine was especially troubling because the modular Army was radically different from the force it was to replace.<sup>47</sup> As a result, it depended heavily not only on traditional means such as firepower and mobility to achieve its ends, but also upon the acquisition, analysis, and transmission of computerized information.

Once again, GEN Sullivan's Army, as with GEN Abram's, transformed far better at improving tactically than it had been at improving strategically, and as a result Army strategic leadership would once again assume greater responsibilities than those

normally associated with their ranks or positions, particularly in joint operations with units from the other American military services or in combined operations with forces from allied nations. Business as usual at the time would not have been adequate for the challenges set before GEN Sullivan. Due to the changing nature of warfare, the nature of the times called for Army strategic leaders to be more than just excellent tacticians of conventional war or rely on technical competence alone to lead the future Army. GEN Sullivan's Army needed strategic leaders with deep expertise across the other three fields of expert knowledge of the profession, particularly the political-cultural, as they dealt increasingly with organizations and entities not traditionally affiliated with the Army.

#### General's Dempsey and Odierno: Shaping the Army of 2020

##### Institutional Army Transformation

Recently, a respected colleague suggested to me that "we are developing the finest linebackers for our Army, but we also need to think about developing the best tight ends, wide receivers and quarterbacks." His comment was not intended to disparage the leaders we are developing today. In fact, there is general agreement that we are the finest and most capable fighting force because of the leaders we have in our ranks today. He was simply pointing out that tactical demands have in many ways trumped operational and strategic demands, and he was encouraging us to think about the future.<sup>48</sup>

Today the U.S. Army is the best trained, best equipped and best-lead combat-tested force in the world. Today's soldiers have achieved a level of professionalism, combat experience and civil and military expertise that is an invaluable national asset. Our Nation has weathered difficult circumstances since the attacks on 9/11, yet we have met every challenge. The mission in Iraq has ended responsibly, continued progress in Afghanistan is enabling a transition to Afghan security responsibility by December 2014 and targeted counterterrorism efforts have significantly weakened al Qaeda and



degraded its leadership. On top of that, our Nation confronts a serious deficit and debt problem that will squeeze future Army budgets which will result in reduction of the Army's end-strength as it faces budgetary realities. There are also ongoing efforts to rebalance force structure and make investment decisions that will shape the Army of 2020. The Army's current focus areas are the following: Support to Operations in Afghanistan, Responsible Stewardship, and a Leaner Army. Under Responsible Stewardship, 'Institutional Army Transition' is one of three subcategories. Under a Leaner Army, 'The Strength of Our Army is Our Soldiers' is one of ten categories.<sup>49</sup>

The drive to reform the Army is about doing things better, smarter and faster while taking advantage of available technology, knowledge and experience. The institutional Army—the part that trains, educates and supports Army forces worldwide—will become more flexible by improving our ability to quickly adapt to changing environments, missions and priorities. The Institutional Army is also working to rapidly address the demands placed on the organization by the current and future operational environments.<sup>50</sup> In order to meet these demands, the Army's focus on developing its leaders became top priority.

### Leader Development

People are the Army, and the priority is to preserve the high-quality, all volunteer force—the essential element of the Army's strength. The challenge in the upcoming years is not just about attracting and selecting the best available candidates to be Army professionals. The Army must engage and develop our quality, combat experienced leaders so that we keep them, and they in turn, train the next generation of Army professionals. During the last decade of war, we have given our young leaders flexibility and authority to operate effectively on the battlefield, but the challenge is to prepare

tomorrow by building on that investment and ensuring that opportunities for creativity, leadership and advancement exist throughout the Army.<sup>51</sup>

In 2011, GEN Dempsey provided us keen insights on how the Army's legacy developed capable and prominent strategic leaders for 235 years but realized that tactical demands of fighting two wars had consumed us as a profession over the past decade. The Army's focus had naturally and correctly been oriented on winning the wars we were in. As the demand to support these wars is reduced, we need to be ready to add to the knowledge, skills and attributes of our brilliant tactical leaders and prepare them to operate at the strategic level. He went on to posit that "to preserve this great legacy, it is our obligation to "keep first things first" and ensure leader development remains our first and foremost priority."<sup>52</sup> What is more unique about GEN Dempsey's insight is that he understood the need for not only the development of leaders at the tactical and operational levels, but to focus more long term—the development of the Army's strategic leadership. Among this imperative, GEN Dempsey asserted that we must "prepare leaders for responsibility at the national level" and to develop leaders who are both accomplished leaders at the tactical level and competent and capable leaders at the operational and strategic level who will not only win today's wars, but also shape the future and win tomorrow's wars.<sup>53</sup>

#### The Army Profession: Agile and Adaptive Leadership

The trends of the current operational environment forced GEN Dempsey to increase his emphasis on adaptation and building an Army profession that embraces a culture of change. As a result of this emphasis, he led a strategic campaign that focused on thinking differently about how to develop leaders, organize, train and equip Soldiers and their formations. On strategic leadership, GEN Dempsey provided some attributes

that future strategic leaders will need to possess in order to negotiate the demands of the future:

Strategic leaders must be inquisitive and open-minded. They must be able to think critically and be capable of developing creative solutions to complex problems. They must be historically minded; that is, they must be able to see and articulate issues in historical context. Possessed of a strong personal and professional ethic, strategic leaders must be able to navigate successfully in ethical “gray zones,” where absolutes may be elusive. Similarly, they must be comfortable with ambiguity and able to provide advice and make decisions with less, not more, information. While all leaders need these qualities, the complexity of problems will increase over the course of an officer’s career and require strategic leaders to develop greater sophistication of thought.<sup>54</sup>

After six months as chief of staff, GEN Raymond Odierno saw that the coming decade would be a vital period of transition for the U.S. Army. From his perspective, GEN Odierno saw the Army as having to adjust to three major changes: declining budgets, a shift in emphasis to the Asia-Pacific region, and a broadening of focus from counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, and training of partners to shaping the strategic environment.<sup>55</sup>

#### General Odierno’s Leadership Development Campaign

Similar to what GEN Dempsey proposed for leader development, GEN Odierno re-engineered the Army Leader Development Strategy, which builds on the Army’s experiences after the end of the Cold War and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>56</sup> The Army Leader Development Strategy responds to these challenges and demands. It seeks to develop agile, adaptive, and innovative Army leaders. The document also discusses the need to have or gain knowledge and understanding of geopolitics, culture, and language; they must act on opportunities within the scope of their units’ collective knowledge and capability.

The strategy also identifies and develops leaders with expertise in financial management, program management, acquisition, education, strategic planning, and force development. Implementation of that strategy recognizes the necessary balance between leadership and technical expertise within leaders, critical to how we address the responsibilities given to us under Title 10 of the U.S. Code.<sup>57</sup>

A commitment to continuing education has been a hallmark of the Army profession, and GEN Odierno is placing tremendous resources and energy into the development of the best educational opportunities for officers. Two areas of focus that required immediate attention was the need to move away from a platform-centric learning model to one that is centered more on learning through facilitation and collaboration; the second issue was to develop and introduce a structured self-development program for officers using the NCO self-development program as a model for what right looks like.<sup>58</sup> GEN Odierno's vision encompasses a program of interrelated and integrated reforms in the areas of personnel policy, organization, doctrine, training, and equipment modernization with innovative and adaptive leaders identified as keys to operational adaptability enabling his efforts in rebalancing leader development (see Figure 2).

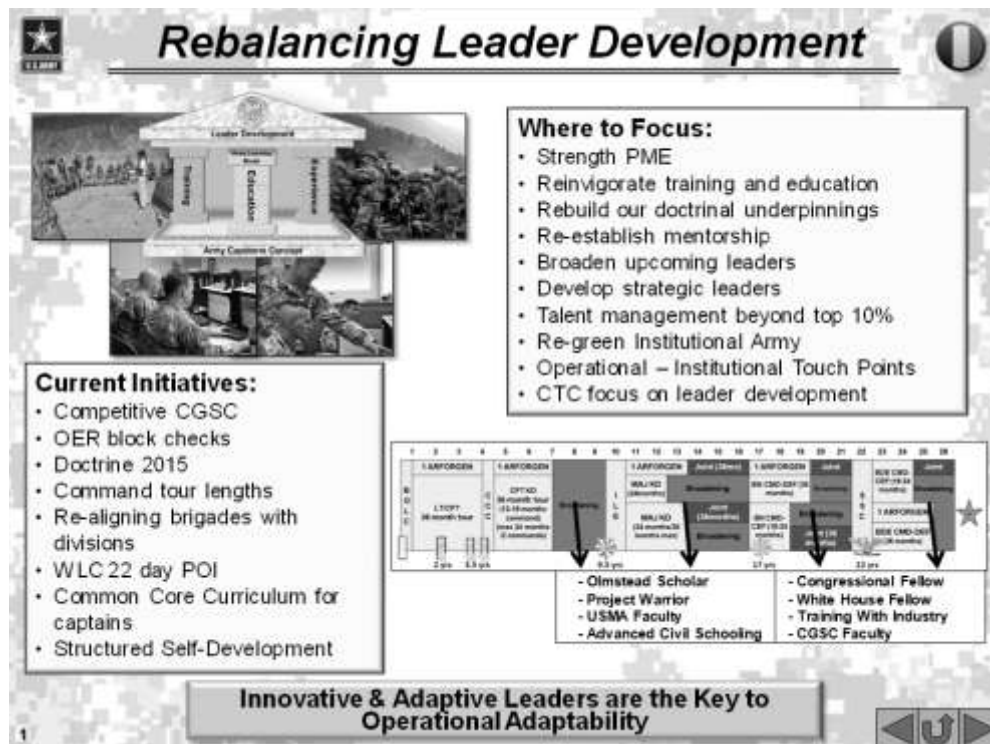



Figure 2: <sup>59</sup>

Because of the demands of the last twelve years of war, we have to ask ourselves whether or not the Army has sent the right strategic message to our leaders; that we value education and broadening experiences as an essential element of strategic leader development. As Tom Ricks states, “commander’s need to be educated less on what to think and more on how to think—and also on how to adapt. They need to learn how to learn. All too often, our generals think like jumped-up battalion commanders—that is, lieutenant colonels.”<sup>60</sup> Harsh words by Mr. Ricks, but the Army doesn’t help itself when it allows Brigade Commanders to command their respective brigades before attending a Senior Service School. Additionally, the Army’s message to the force that speaks to seeking out “broadening assignments” does not align itself well on how the Army promotes its officers. As seen in Figure 3 below, out of

the 15 officers selected for FY06 Tactical Brigade Command, only five officers served in a broadening assignment (see Figure 3).



### Evidence of a Culture Emphasizing the Kinetic Fight

#### FY06 Tactical Brigade Command Selection List

*Last 15 assignments from Sep 30, 2005*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1	BATTALION COMMANDER	OPERATIONS OFFICER	EXECUTIVE OFFICER	PLANS OFFICER	S1	STUDENT	ASST PROF OF MIL SCIENCE	S4	COMPANY COMMANDER	DEPT INVESTIGATIVE	ASST S1	PLATOON LEADER			
2	BATTALION COMMANDER	ANALYST	STUDENT	OPERATIONS OFFICER	BATTALION S1	BATTALION S1	B COMPANY COMMANDER	HHC COMPANY COMMANDER	PLANS OFFICER	PLANS OFFICER	PLANS OFFICER	FLIGHT OPS OFFICER	BATTALION S4	PLATOON LEADER	PLATOON LEADER
3	BATTALION COMMANDER	BATTALION COMMANDER COL	CHIEF INTERFORNSM BR	BRIGADE S1	CHIEF BASIC LEADER BR	OPERATIONS STAFF OFFICER	DEPUTY PROTEST MARSHAL	HEADQUARTERS COMMAND	DIVISION LIAISON OFFICER	COMPANY COMMANDER	ASSTANT S1 TAG OFFICER	FOR INSTALL DET FACILITY	PLATOON LEADER		
4	KNOWLEDGE	BATTALION COMMANDER	STRATEGIC PLANS OFFICER	CHIEF RANGER BRANCH	BATTALION S1	G2 CHIEF OF OPERATIONS	FOURTH COMPANY COMMANDER	ASSTANT S1	COMPANY COMMANDER	RIFLE COMPANY COMMANDER	BATTALION S1	ASSTANT S1	RIFLE PLATOON LEADER	RIFLE PLATOON LEADER	ASSTANT ADJUTANT
5	CHIEF, CORRECTIONS S1	STUDENT	BATTALION S1	BATTALION S1	ASSTANT S1	AIDE DE CAMP	TRAINING INST OFFICER	BN S4	COMPANY COMMANDER	COMPANY COMMANDER	PLANS OFFICER	PLANS OFFICER	ASSTANT S1	PLATOON LEADER	
6	COMMANDER	EXECUTIVE TO PALE	EDUCATION INTERFORNSM OFF	SR MIL ANALYST EFFECT	EXECUTIVE OFFICER	EXECUTIVE OFFICER	BATTALION S1	OPERATIONS OFFICER	COMMANDER	S1D OFFICER					
7	INCOMING PERSONNEL	BATTALION COMMANDER	BATTALION COMMANDER	ASSTANT G-2	JOINT BRANCH COMMANDER	BRIGADE S1	TANK BATTALION S1	TANK BATTALION S1	STUDENT	ARMOR OPS OFFICER	ARMOR OPS OFFICER	ASST PROFESSOR MIL SCI	TANK COMPANY COMMANDER	TANK COMPANY COMMANDER	TANK COMPANY COMMANDER
8	SOC FELLOW MIT-CAMBRIDGE	TASK FORCE S1D	BATTALION COMMANDER	CHIEF JOINT EXERCISE DIV	BRIGADE S1	DEPUTY COMMANDER	BATTALION S1	SECRETARY GENERAL STAFF	BRIGADE ASST OPS D1C	BRIGADE ASST OPS D1C	BATTALION ANALYST D1C	BRIGADE ASSTANT S1	RIFLE COMPANY COMMANDER	RIFLE COMPANY COMMANDER	RIFLE COMPANY COMMANDER
9	CHIEF CURRENT OPERATIONS	BATTALION COMMANDER	COL ASSTANT OFFICER	LTC ASSTANT OFFICER	MAJ ASSTANT OFFICER	BATTALION S1	BATTALION S1	DIVISION CONTROL OFFICER	FORCE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER	JCS INTERNA	COMPANY COMMANDER	INSTALLATION TRANS OFFICER	ASSTANT GROUP S1	GROUP S1 OFFICER	ASSTANT GROUP S1
10	DR OF INTELLIGENCE	DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE	CH COMMAND BRANCH BR	CH BAT (DAMAGE ASSESS BR)	BRIGADE S1	BATTALION S1	BRIGADE S1	SEPA COMPANY COMMANDER	EXECUTIVE ASSTANT	COMPANY COMMANDER	BATTALION S1 OPERATION	RANGER BATTALION S1	RANGER REGIMENT ASST S1	AIDE DE CAMP TO ADC SPT	BATTALION S1
11	JOINT OBSERVATION ASST	OPERATIONS OFFICER	OPERATIONS OFFICER	CHIEF G3 OPERATIONS	ASSTANT S1	COMPANY COMMANDER	BATTALION ADJUTANT	COMPANY COMMANDER	BRIGADE S1	BRIGADE S1	BATTALION S1	BATTALION S1	ASSTANT S1	EXECUTIVE OFFICER	PLATOON LEADER
12	PLANS OPS DIV CHIEF	BATTALION COMMANDER	CHIEF LAD FT INW	PLANS OFFICER BR CHIEF	POL BRANCH CHIEF	EXECUTIVE OFFICER	LOGISTICS ANALYST	SENIOR F3B OBSERVER CHIEF	SUR	ASST G4 SUP AND SVC OFF	BN EXECUTIVE OFFICER	BATTALION S1	BATTALION S1	BATTALION S1	INSTRUMENT
13	BATTALION COMMANDER	OBSERVATION ASST	BATTALION S1	PSYCHOLOGY PROFESSOR	PSYCHOLOGY INSTRUCTOR	BATTALION ASST S1	BATTERY COMMANDER	BATTERY COMMANDER	BATTERY COMMANDER	BATTALION S1	BATTERY S1	BATTERY MAINT OFFICER	PLATOON LEADER		
14	DEPUTY G4 V COPPS	COMMISSION FELLOW	EXECUTIVE OFFICER	BRIGADE S1	STUDENT	FIELD GRADE TROOP CDR	OPERATIONS OFFICER	COMPANY COMMANDER	OPERATIONS OFFICER	ASSTANT DIV COM OFFICER	PRG SUPPORT OFFICER	EXECUTIVE OFFICER	PRG SUPPORT OFFICER		
15	DIVISION G3	BATTALION COMMANDER	JT GRID MANEUVER	CO AIDE DE CAMP	CHIEF, JOINT EXERCISES	BATTALION S1	CHIEF PERSONNEL AND TRG	HHC BDE CO COMMANDER	AIDE DE CAMP	AIDE DE CAMP	ASSTANT BRIGADE S1	COMPANY COMMANDER	OPERATIONS OFFICER	CHIEF LAD BRANCH	RIFLE PLATOON LEADER

Source: OMF

33

Figure 3: <sup>61</sup>

Though being revised as of this writing, current Army personnel policies remain very rigid in its model for developing senior leaders. Has the Army profession, grown a culture where officers aspiring to the highest positions of responsibility are selecting narrow career paths at the expense of their development to perform at the strategic level? With that being said, the current active Army 4-Star General's may or may not agree due to the fact that 7 of 10 (70%) have served in 2 or more broadening

assignments before they served as Brigade Commanders. If broadening opportunities were good for them, then what makes it so bad for others to model? In retrospect, until the Army further defines what it means by broadening assignments, it will remain difficult to send strategic messages that support professional military education (PME) and civilian education as an investment and not a tax on the Army profession. Our opportunity to transform the way we invest in our officer corps is now! But that transformation won't start by just changing our policies and our learning institutions—it must first begin with our military senior leaders.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

Army general officers must be agile enough to understand and adapt to their environment. They must be culturally astute and comfortable in ambiguous or complex environments, and be able to shape their environment through a combination of authority, influence and persuasion. When selecting our general officers, look for broadening experiences and education, but also look for officers who have demonstrated vision, energy, creativity, a willingness to take prudent risks, good communication and interpersonal skills. Look for officers who can and will seize, retain and exploit the initiative across the range of military operations.<sup>62</sup>

### Where We Are Now

Organizations work the way they work because of the ways that people work. Army policies and rules did not create the challenges of effectively developing Army strategic leaders, nor will they eliminate them. The difficulties faced by Army PME are influenced by senior leader mental models and relationships in the Army's culture—at every level, from lieutenant to General in Army formations to the national political governing bodies that oversee military affairs. If the Army wants to improve our system of developing strategic leaders, before we change the rules we must first look to the ways that current senior leaders think and interact together. Otherwise, the new policies

and Army initiatives will simply fade away, and the Army will revert, over time, to the way it was before.

The FY12 Brigadier General Active Competitive Category, dated 12 December 2012, announced that the President nominated 34 colonels for promotion to the rank of brigadier general—there were no minorities or women among those selected. This may be what Seymour Sarason meant when he wrote, “The more things change, the more they will remain the same.”<sup>63</sup> Sarason argues here that effective reform cannot happen until people move beyond superficial conceptions of educational systems and recognize the unseen values and attitudes about power; privilege, and knowledge that keep existing structures, regulations, and authority relationships in place. Case in point: if the Army doesn’t shift how our senior leaders think and interact, as well as in how they explore new ideas, then all the reorganizing, fads, and strategies won’t add up to much. It is the ghost of Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Paul Yingling once again. In *A Failure In Generalship*, Yingling wrote, “The system that produces our generals does little to reward creativity and moral courage. Officers rise to flag rank by following remarkably similar career patterns. Senior generals, both active and retired, are the most important figures in determining an officer’s potential for flag rank...to move up he must only please his superiors. In a system in which senior officers select for promotion those like themselves, there are powerful incentives for conformity.”<sup>64</sup>

Changing the way senior leaders think means continually shifting our point of orientation. The Army must make time to look inward: to become aware of, and study the tacit “truths” that we take for granted. The Army must also look outward: exploring new ideas and different ways of thinking and interacting, connecting to multiple



processes and relationships outside ourselves, and clarifying our shared visions for the Army. Changing the way the Army interacts means redesigning not just the formal structures of the Army, but the hard-to-see patterns of relationships among senior leaders and other aspects of the Army, including the Army's learning and personnel systems.

### Investment in Human Capital

In the Chinese language, two characters represent the word "learning." The first character means "to study." It is composed of two parts: a symbol that means "to accumulate knowledge" is placed above a symbol for a child in a doorway.

The second character means "to practice constantly," and it shows a bird developing the ability to leave the nest. The upper symbol represents flying; the lower symbol, youth. For the Asian mind, learning is ongoing. "Study" and "practice constantly," together, suggest that learning should mean: "mastery of the way of self-improvement."<sup>65</sup> The time is now to better invest in the Army's human capital—the Soldier.

Figure 4 below illustrates a learning curve (L) for an officer over a 25 year period. For this example, the L curve depicted here is linear and doesn't take into account that people learn at different scales over time. As illustrated at L1, if the Army transforms learning and introduces strategic concepts earlier in an officer's career it may provide a depth of colonels who are better equipped to negotiate strategic level issues at the political and cultural levels. For example, Army learning institutions at the company grades continue to focus learning on the tactical and technical aspects of their branches, but introduce a little of the art of how strategic leaders solve problems and how it affects them at the tactical and operational level. At the field grade level, the

lesson plans for PME shifts: the School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) lesson plans shift to ILE and Army War College (AWC) lesson plans shift to SAMS. The AWC focus then shifts toward focusing the students on leading enterprises, influencing national policies and providing military advice to civilian leadership, understanding the art of strategic messaging, the nation's budgeting process, and receiving a Ph. D. type of education in the art of war. Using a military-to-business cooperation model may assist senior leaders in making the tactical to strategic leap by spending time with a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a major corporation, as an observer, to get a different perspective on how senior leaders negotiate problems in their operational environment. The same can be said of a military-to-political cooperation as students from the AWC spend time with members the Executive and Legislative branches to see where and how the military influences national policy.



Figure 4: <sup>66</sup>

## The Rigid Army Promotion System

The Army should start by overhauling the officer personnel management system to allow for greater specialization among the ranks in order to build the bench of strategic leadership (see Figure 5). Assigning, evaluating, utilizing, and promoting colonels with an approach resembling that which is used with general officers acknowledges that as officers move into strategic positions, fine-tuned development is preferred over mass production techniques. With such an approach, brigade command is no longer the only path to general officer as dictated by current regulations. As a result, a larger, more diverse bench of strategically-oriented colonel is developed.<sup>67</sup> By reaching deeper into the officer corps below the general officer ranks to identify and develop strategic leaders, the Army will also engender a deeper commitment from colonels as they are developed and utilized differently from their experience in previous ranks.<sup>68</sup>

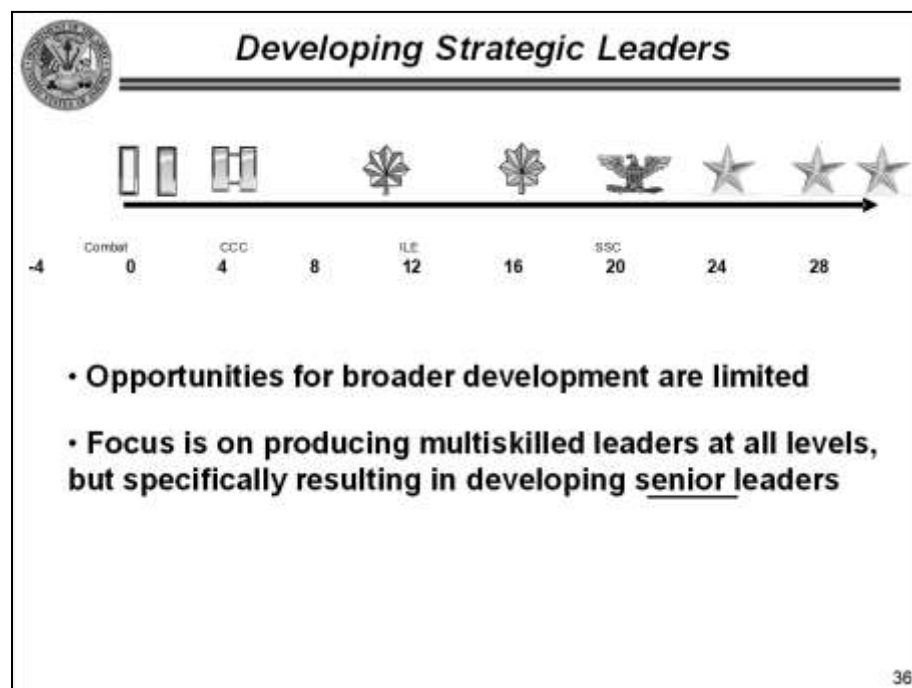


Figure 5: <sup>69</sup>

## Accountability in the Promotion System

In a system in which senior officers select for promotion those like themselves, there are powerful incentives for conformity. It is unreasonable to expect that an officer who spends years conforming to institutional expectations will emerge as an innovator in his late forties.<sup>70</sup>

The Secretary of the Army needs to be more involved in the system for selecting general officers as a means of oversight to avoid “group think”<sup>71</sup> among senior rank and file. In essence, any cohesive “in-group” of individuals who generally think along similar lines can be a breeding ground for group think. The general officer community can facilitate the advisory process at strategic levels but can also repress critical analysis—the thoughtful dissenting voice that can cause those in the majority to reexamine their assumptions and commitments—with consequent errors in decisional outcomes, much like that of the FY12 Brigadier General Active Competitive Category results. The Secretary can act as this dissenting voice and challenge assumptions from senior military leaders to avoid errors stemming from limitations of individuals and organizations augmented by group processes that produce shared miscalculations.<sup>72</sup>

The Army’s civilian overseers, both the Pentagon and in the Congress, should be wary when the Army rejects suggested changes and defends current personnel policies on the grounds of fairness. This tends, in reality, to be code for placing the interests of officers and the institutional Army above the interests of the rank-and-file or of the nation as a whole.<sup>73</sup> Break the code and the Army will develop the adaptive, agile strategic leaders our nation needs in order to effectively lead large organizations and influence hundreds to thousands of people. Additionally, the Army will develop strategic

leaders who better establish force structure, allocate resources, communicate strategic vision, and prepare commands and the Army for future roles.

## Endnotes

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<sup>2</sup> Barbara Starr, "Pushback on Obama's potential European command nominee," February 9, 2012, <http://security.blogs.cnn.com/2012/02/09/pushback-on-obamas-potential-european-command-nominee/> (accessed February 11, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> Barbara Starr, "Pushback on Obama's potential European command nominee," February 9, 2012, <http://security.blogs.cnn.com/2012/02/09/pushback-on-obamas-potential-european-command-nominee/> (accessed February 11, 2013).

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<sup>5</sup> James M. Dubik, "On Becoming a Strategic Leader," *Army Magazine*, January 2013, 16.

<sup>6</sup> James M. Dubik, "On Becoming a Strategic Leader," *Army Magazine*, January 2013, 16.

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<sup>8</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Doctrinal Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-22, Army Leadership* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, August 1, 2012), 11-2.

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Doctrinal Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-22, Army Leadership* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, August 1, 2012), 2-6.

<sup>10</sup> John M. McHugh and Raymond T. Odierno, *Army Posture, The Nation's Force of Decisive Action: A Statement on the Posture of the United States Army 2012*, Posture Statement presented to the 112th Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, 2012), 11.

<sup>11</sup> Charles E. Heller and William A. Stofft, *America's First Battles: 1776-1965*, (Kansas: University Press of Kansas), xii.

<sup>12</sup> Charles E. Heller and William A. Stofft, *America's First Battles: 1776-1965*, Kansas: University Press of Kansas), xii.

<sup>13</sup> Martin E. Dempsey, "Leader Development," *Army* (February 2011), 25, <http://search.proquest.com/printviewfile?accountid=4444> (accessed November 2, 2012).

<sup>14</sup> Bob Johansen, *Leaders Make the Future: Ten New Leadership Skills for an Uncertain World* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2009), xxiii.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, xiv.

<sup>16</sup> Charles E. Heller and William A. Stofft, *America's First Battles: 1776-1965*, (Kansas: University Press of Kansas), xii.

<sup>17</sup> James M. Dubik, "On Becoming a Strategic Leader," *Army Magazine*, January 2013, 18.

<sup>18</sup> John Shy, "First Battles in Retrospect," in *America's First Battles: 1776-1965*, ed. Charles E. Heller and William A. Stofft (Kansas: University Press of Kansas), 331.

<sup>19</sup> Lewis Sorley, *Press On! Selected Works of General Don A. Starry, Volume 1: Selected, Edited, Annotated, and with Introductory Essay by Lewis Sorley* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2009), ix.

<sup>20</sup> US Army Center of Military History, *American Military History, Volume II, "Rebuilding the Army: Vietnam to Desert Storm,"* <http://www.history.army.mil/books/AMH-V2/AMH%20V2/chapter12.htm> , 372 (accessed November 2, 2012).

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 370.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 370.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 372.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 372.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 372.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 376.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 376.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 377.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 378.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 380.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 386.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 386.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 390.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 390.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 390.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 390.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 391.

<sup>39</sup> Leonard Wong and Don M. Snider, "Strategic Leadership of the Army Profession, The Future of the Army Profession", in *The Future of the Army Profession* 2d edition, ed. Lloyd J. Matthews (Boston: McGraw-Hill), 605.

<sup>40</sup> US Army Center of Military History, *American Military History, Volume II, "Rebuilding the Army: Vietnam to Desert Storm,"* <http://www.history.army.mil/books/AMH-V2/AMH%20V2/chapter12.htm> , 377 (accessed November 2, 2012).

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Pamphlet 525–68, *Concept for Modularity* (Fort Monroe, VA: Headquarters, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 10 January 1995), pars. 4-3 and 4-4.

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<sup>48</sup> GEN Martin E. Dempsey, "Building critical thinkers: Leader development must be the Army's top priority," *Armed Forces Journal*, February 2011, <http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/2011/02/5663450> (accessed November 2, 2012).

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 8.

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<sup>61</sup> Daniel Denning and James Lovelace, Review of Education, Training and Assignments for Leaders (RETAL)," briefing slides with scripted commentary, Carlisle Barracks, PA, U.S. Army War College, April 4, 2006.

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<sup>70</sup> Paul Yingling, “A Failure of Generalship,” *Armed Forces Journal*, May 2007, <http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/2007/05/2635198> (accessed February 11, 2013).

<sup>71</sup> Irving L. Janis, *Groupthink*, 2d Edition, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982), 9. Group think is defined by social psychologist Irving Janis as “a mode of thinking that people engage in when they are deeply involved in a cohesive ingroup, when members’ strivings for unanimity override their motivation to realistically appraise alternative courses of action.

<sup>72</sup> Irving L. Janis, *Groupthink*, 2d Edition, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982), 7.

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